

**AUSTRALIAN TEXTILES**

Page : 51

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.27pm]: Tonight I again highlight concerns from an Australian textiles company about the future of Australian woolgrowers, manufacturers and associated industries. As I have stated before in this House, Instyle Contract Textiles is a leading supplier of contract furnishing textiles. Instyle, in conjunction with the Woolmark Company, has developed an environmentally preferable textile collection called LIFE Textiles. These textiles are produced locally to strict environmental criteria from sustainable rapidly renewable resources, including Australian eco-wool and organically certified wool.

Instyle is continuing its efforts to seek changes to government procurement policies favouring recycled content and has kept me well informed of its plight. Instyle is urging the various levels of government in Australia to expand its procurement policies to include all environmentally preferable products from rapidly renewable and all non-hazardous recycled materials. However, another matter concerning the rating tools of the Green Building Council (GBC) of Australia, has a greater potential to damage the Australian wool growing industry, local textile manufacturers and the environment. The GBC is a non-profit organisation that was funded initially by the Department of Defence, the New South Wales and Victorian Labor Governments and member companies. The GBC office interiors rating tool specifies recycled content and organic content as eco preferable materials, that is, textiles and carpets.

Certified organic content accounts for an extremely small percentage of available product. The only textiles currently available in Australia with recycled content are made from polyester fibres manufactured overseas. These recycled textiles, polyethylene terephthalate (PET), contain harmful and toxic substances that create environmental and human health risks during production, use, disposal and recycling. Instyle is concerned that its LIFE Textiles product and other wool textiles and carpets have been excluded from the Green Building Council (GBC) Green Stars Office Interiors rating tool, yet imported recycled PET product are included.

The decision to exclude sustainable rapidly renewable content and locally produced materials goes against the GBC's predecessors, such as the Centre for Design at RMIT and the United States of America Green Building Councils LEED rating system, which recognise rapidly renewable and locally produced materials. The use of rapidly renewable materials reduces the use and depletion of limited raw materials, and local production supports the use of indigenous resources and reduces the impacts associated with transportation. The GBC's unique stance will eliminate better sustainable options and could have serious consequences for the Australian wool-growing and Australian textile manufacturing industries.

The South Australian Government had adopted the GBC rating tools for all government office accommodation, and the other States, including New South Wales, have indicated that they would follow suit. Instyle would like support in reversing the GBC decision and would ask that the State governments do not adopt a green building standard that is fundamentally flawed. The GBC has been slow to respond and all responses to date have not addressed  indeed, all have deliberately avoided  the issues raised by Instyle. The GBC has claimed that overgrazing is the number one environmental issue in Australia, cited from a CIA website. Credible reasons for the exclusion have not been provided and this, frankly, is not acceptable. The GBC has not been open and transparent, nor has it been accountable.

I support Instyle in its quest for the Green Building Council to recognise rapidly renewable and locally produced resources, that is, wool textiles, and seek the New South Wales Government's support in doing so.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.32pm until Tuesday 20 September at 2.30pm